

SECRET

Combat Observer  
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
Headquarters, VI Corps  
APO 46

SECRET  
Auth: CG, ETOUSA  
Initials:  
DATE 12 Jan 1945

SUBJECT: Observer's Report No. 57 (Battle Experiences, 14th AD)  
(German Tactical Use of Searchlights in a Ground Role)  
(Infantry Training Principles)

TO : Chief, Combat Lessons Branch, G-3, Headquarters,  
European Theater of Operations, United States  
Army, APO 887, U. S. Army

1. Pursuant to instructions which place me on duty as  
combat observer with VI Corps, the following report is sub-  
mitted in triplicate.

2. Material for this report was obtained by personal  
contact with G-2 and G-3 Sections, VI Corps.

3. Battle Experiences, 14th AD: See Incl Number One.-  
G-3 Section, VI Corps.

4. German Tactical Use of Searchlights in a Ground Role:

a. Observations  
b. Recommended counter measures: See Incl Number Two.  
G-2 Section, VI Corps.

5. Infantry Training Principles: See Incl Number Three.-  
G-3 Section, VI Corps.

Note: In my report No. 47, dated 3 January 1945, I  
included copies of Training Memorandums published by the 36th  
Inf Div. These Memorandums were well written and contained a lot  
of valuable information for training of combat units. The VI Corps,  
as you can see by inclosure number three, has reproduced the  
Training Memorandum and issued them to the units of the Corps.

PETE T. HEFFNER, JR  
Colonel, Infantry  
Combat Observer

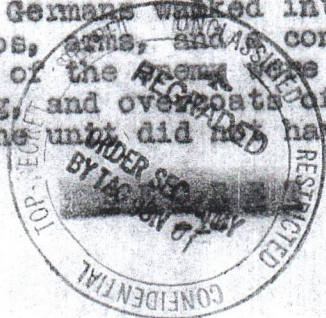
Information copy to Commanding General, VI Corps without incls

3 Incls:

Incl No. 1 (Battle Experiences, 14th AD)  
Incl No. 2 (German Tactical Use of Searchlights in a Ground Role)  
Incl No. 2 (Infantry Training Principles)









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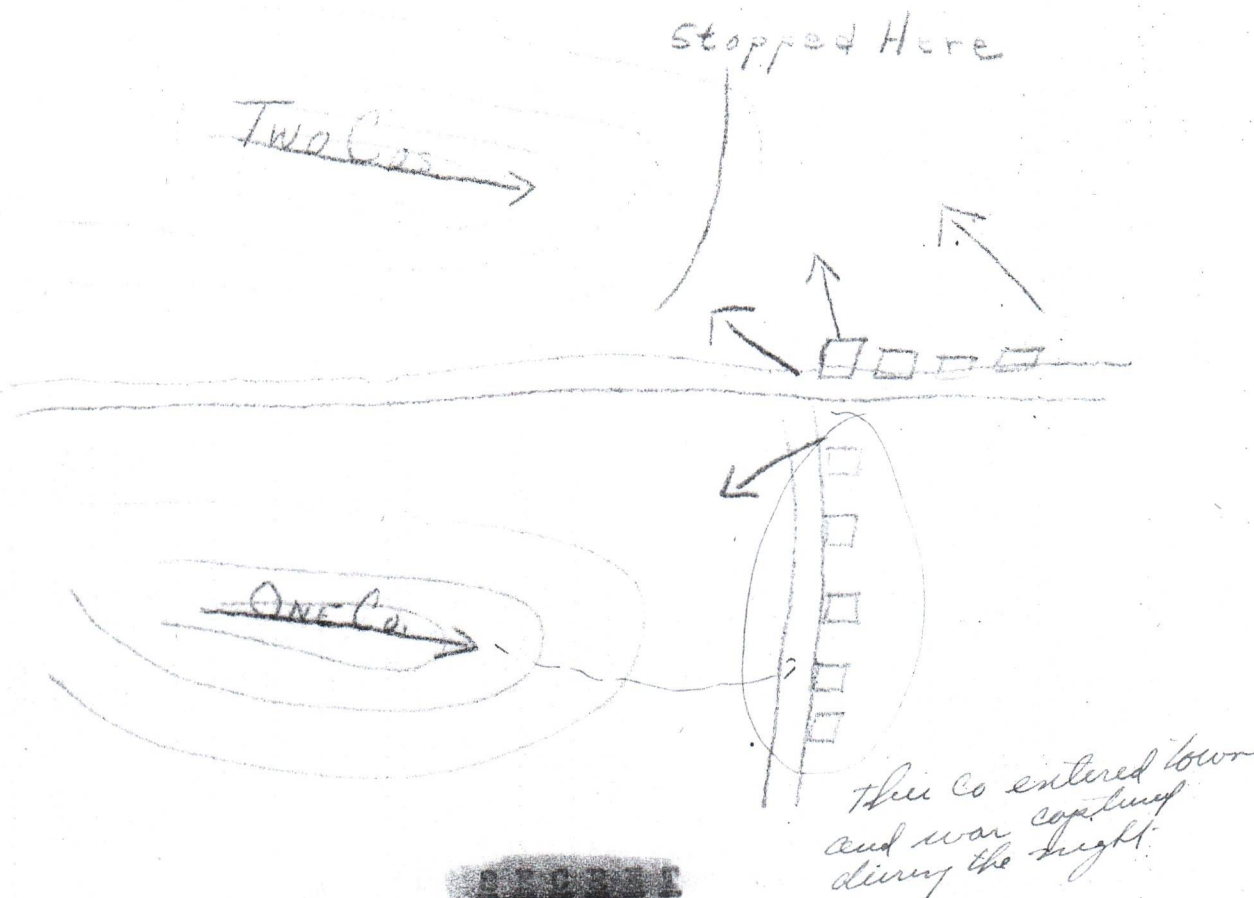
✓ Drussenheim: The enemy during the night infiltrated into the town and surrounded a company of troops new to combat. This company was rescued by friendly troops the following day. One officer and fifteen men were found hidden in the basement of a house without having provided for their own defense.

✓ Baerenthal: A company was surprised and surrounded but managed to fight off enemy attacks until rescued two days later by friendly troops.

✓ Wingen: Elements of a Bn was surprised and captured. The enemy, reported to be about 500, was in turn surrounded by three Bn of friendly troops. (All Bns new to combat). Due to lack of alertness the majority of the enemy escaped during the night in groups of from 20 to 40 without being fired upon. When the town was recaptured the following day, between 150 to 200 friendly troops were rescued and about 65 enemy PWs captured. - Combat Observer with VI Corps.

✓ 4. Comments of a Regimental Commander: To prevent our men being surprised in a village and to facilitate our defense we centralize our forces in groups not smaller than a platoon. The platoon are responsible for their defense. It would be of great advantage to us if when we go into a town for someone to tell us that all of the Nazis had been cleared from the town. We are new to combat but we have learned the hard way the importance of everyone knowing where all of our weapons are located. Time should be taken to see that all weapons are properly sited for defense. - Colonel H. L. Luongo, CO, 222nd Inf Regt.

5. Brig Gen Winn's Comments: A Bn was attacking a village utilizing two ridges leading into it as follows:



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The one company entered the town just before dark. It failed to post proper security and the entire company was captured during the night in small groups by the enemy. We shouldn't scatter our units in small groups but should keep Bns more or less intact so that they can hit a coordinated blow. Many times our companies while fighting in towns and woods are from 2 to 3 kilometers apart. I do not believe that platoons should ever be more than 200 yards apart. We should always have a reserve within easy supporting distance. - Brig Gen Winn, Acting Arty Officer, 79th Inf Div.

Note: The above on the lack of security in villages and towns is submitted at the suggestion of Colonel Charles Palmer, Chief of Staff, VI Corps. He feels that any information that will assist our troops in preventing their being surprised by the enemy will be of great value especially to troops new to combat. - P. T. Heffner, Combat Observer, VI Corps.

PETE T. HEFFNER, JR  
Colonel, Infantry  
Combat Observer

Information copy to Commanding General, VI Corps

**S E C R E T**



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Combat Observer  
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
Headquarters, VI Corps  
APO 46

SECRET  
Auth: CG, ETOUSA  
Initials: ATX  
DATE 7 Jan 1945

SUBJECT: Observer's Report No. 51 (Contact) (Supply) (Pozit Fuze) (Close Air Support) (Combat Tips and Reminders) (G-2 Periodic Report, VI Corps)

TO : Chief, Combat Lessons Branch, G-3, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, APO 887, U. S. Army

1. Pursuant to instructions which place me on duty as combat observer with VI Corps, the following report is submitted in triplicate.

2. Material for this report was obtained by personal interview with Lt Col C. M. Sagmoen, Ex Off, 313th Inf Regt, 78th Inf Div; Major Carl D. McGuire, FA S-3 and Lt Col J. H. Harrison FA CO, 501st FA Bn, 14th AD; Major Paul A. McVag FA, S-3 and Major James A. Roming, Air Officer, 6th FA Group; Major Leon C. Smith, Inf Air Support Section, 79th Inf Div and by contact with G-3 Section, 3rd Inf Div. + G-2 sect # Corps

3. Contact: We were able to maintain contact with two of our companies that had been cut off by the enemy for two days by contacting the 14th AD artillery and having them use cub plane to drop batteries for the RCA 300 Radio. The batteries were wrapped in a German overcoat and other clothing and a blanket was used for a parachute. The drop was a success.

Supply: When a junction was made with the force cut off the supply road remained under enemy small arms fire so we used medium tanks during the night to carry supplies to the two companies. -Lt Col C. M. Sagmoen, Ex Off, 313th Inf Regt.

4. Comments on Use of the Pozit Fuze: We fired 50 rds using the Pozit fuze against enemy personnel at ranges between 8000 and 9000 yds. No duds and one high burst were reported. The height of the burst were uniform and excellent. We think it is great stuff. We like to use it when we can't use the M54. We have had difficulty with the M54 due to the large number of different lot numbers which caused non-uniform time of burning. The Pozit is excellent except for the time it takes to prepare it for firing. If we have plenty of time and are going to stay in a position it is okay but if we have prepared rounds for firing and then we have to move it delays the move because we have to take them apart before moving. You can shoot the Pozit fuze at its maximum range and still get good bursts. -Major Carl D. McGuire FA, S-3, 501st FA Bn, 14th AD, and Lt Col J. H. Harrison FA CO, 501st FA Bn, 14th AD.

We fired a night mission, 52 rds Pozit fuze, observed by plane on Dec 30, 1944 against an enemy supply dump and docks in the vicinity of Karlsruhe. Ranges; supply dump 1400 yds, docks 1350 yds. The bursts appeared to be at a uniform height. No rounds were observed going off before they reached the targets. We think the Pozit is excellent and would like to use more of them. We fired the above with 155mm How's. - Major Paul A. McVag FA S-3 and Major James A. Roming Air Off, 6th FA Group.





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5. Close Air Support: The following information was furnished by the 79th Inf Div.

a. In this Division the Air Support Party consists of one Major, a 299 radio with crew of six EM's, netted with army for receipt of results from and transmitted of information to the air fields. In addition there are two pilots, rotated every two weeks, with a VHF radio and crew of five, for control of close support missions in direct support of this Division. The control section is located with the G-2 - G-3 sections with the VHF radio remoted, likewise a speaker is connected in the G-2 section in order that pilot observations and results may be heard.

b. At the present time no flights are being controlled by forward controllers in this Division. The effort of XII TAC is limited to 15% for this Corps and is being used entirely for pre-arranged - prebriefed targets combined with armed recon sweeps.

c. In the early part of this campaign, flights have called back for additional air borne flights to aid them in the destruction of a target. This occurred several times while being supported by XIX TAC.

d. In this Division the forward controller has always operated from the Division CP and moves with the Division CP. The Division is very air-minded and has had very good success with only a few unfortunate incidents of bombing and strafing of friendly installations.

e. The present arrangement of one VHF radio with the Division CP is sufficient for the successful control of close support missions.

f. At the present time Corps has one L-5 cub equipped with VHF for the vectoring and leading in of fighter-bombers. One of these with each Division, operating from the artillery cub strip and under Division control would be very advantageous.

g. Army Air Support Section is kept fully informed of this Division's situation and intentions by the Air Support Officer through Air Support Channels. This information is consolidated and passed on to the Ground Liaison Officer's at the fields for dissemination to the flying personnel.

h. To the best of my knowledge, rocket firing aircraft have never been requested nor have they operated in this sector. - Major Leon G. Smith, Inf, Air Support Section.

6. Combat Tips and Reminders: See Incl Number One. Furnished by G-3 Section, 3rd Inf Div.

7. G-2 Periodic Report: See Incl Number Two. Furnished by G-2 Section, VI Corps.

PETE T. HEFFNER, JR  
Colonel, Infantry  
Combat Observer

Information copy to Commanding General, VI Corps without inclosures

2 Incls:

- Incl No. 1 (Combat Tips and Reminders)
- Incl No. 2 (G-2 Periodic Report, VI Corps)



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Combat Observer  
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
Headquarters, VI Corps  
APO 46

SECRET  
Auth: CG, ETOUSA  
Initials: OTZ  
DATE 3 Jan 1945

SUBJECT: Observer's Report No. 47 (Pozit Fuze) (Battalion Training Program) (Duties of Battalion Commanders in Combat) (Rifle Platoon in Defense) (Deficiencies in Small Unit Infantry Combat) (Road Blocks) (The Five Fundamentals)

TO : Chief, Combat Lessons Branch, G-3, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, APO 887, U. S. Army

1. Pursuant to instructions which place me on duty as combat observer with VI Corps, the following report is submitted in triplicate.

2. Material for this report was obtained by personal interview with Lt Col T. G. Carrey, CO, 312th FA Bn, (155mm How), 79th Inf Div; Major S. H. Gibbons, S-3, 79th Inf Div FA; Brigadier General Dough Wahl, CO, 79th Inf Div Arty; Capt E. A. Rathmann, S-3, 904th FA Bn, 79th Inf Div, and by contact with Brig Gen R. I. Stack, Asst Div Commander, 36th Inf Div.

3. Pozit (Proximity Fuze, 312th FA Bn, 155mm How): We used the Pozit fuze to make a high burst registration. We picked a forward slope of a hill so that it could be observed from our CP's. We first fired the high burst for registration and then we fired all our night harassing fires based on that registration. Following the registration with the Pozit fuze we tried to check it with the M67 fuze but we were unable to get a registration with that fuze. The M67 fuze just isn't any good. It is unsatisfactory.

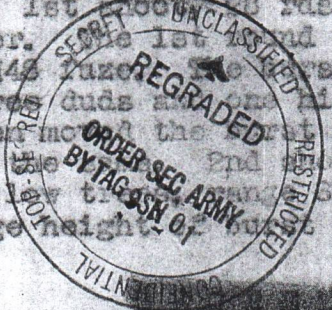
Opinion: We think that the Pozit fuze is very good. We had eight observers observing the shoot and all uniformly reported that the Pozit fuze was excellent. You get a uniform height of burst at the correct height. Another advantage is that when searching an area changes in range do not affect the height of the burst. The Pozit Fuze can be used with the impact fuze as follows: Fire one round of the Pozit fuze to obtain an air burst and the adjustment by using the impact fuze gives the correct range when modified by tabular values then shoot the Pozit fuze for effect.- Lt Col T. G. Carrey, CO, 312th FA Bn, (155mm How)

Note: Report on Firing of Shell M107 with Fuze T76E6, 312th FA Bn signed by John I. Savorias, Major, FA, S-3, 312th FA Bn.- See Incl Number One.

4. The artillery believe that the Pozit fuze is excellent. The use of a point detonator with the fuze will increase its effectiveness.- Major S. H. Gibbons, S-3, 79th Inf Div FA.

The Pozit fuze looks awfully good. I believe that there is too much restriction at the present time on the use of planes when using the fuze. No doubt but that these restrictions will be revised after we become more familiar with it.-Brig Gen Dough Wahl, CO, 79th Inf Div Artillery.

904th FA Bn; (105 mm How): We have fired two observed shoots as follows: 1st shot: 30 rds, range 8500 yds. Target village of Kapsweyer. 1st shot was about 50 yds over. We adjusted with the M43 fuze. 2nd shot averaged about 15 yds in height. We had three duds and one high burst. We first fired at flat ground and then moved the gun over houses. The height of the burst remained the same. 2nd shot: 30 rds, target flat open terrain with small trees. 3rd shot: 30 rds, target 3500 yds. Four duds, three high bursts, average height of burst 20 yds. Burst just above the trees.





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Combat Observer  
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
Headquarters, VI Corps  
APO 46

SECRET  
Auth: CG, ETOUSA  
Initials: [Signature]  
DATE 2 Jan 1945

SUBJECT: Observer's Report No. 46 (Pozit-Proximity-Fuze) (G-2 Periodic Report)

TO : Chief, Combat Lessons Branch, G-3, Headquarters,  
European Theater of Operations, United States  
Army, APO 887, U. S. Army

1. Pursuant to instructions which place me on duty as combat observer with VI Corps, the following report is submitted in triplicate.

2. Material for this report was obtained by personal interview with Brigadier General Carl A. Baehr, VI Corps Artillery Officer and by contact with G-2 Section, VI Corps.

3. Pozit (Proximity) Fuze:

The 938th FA Bn (155 How) has had a chance to observe the effect of the pozit fuze. On 31 Dec 1944 it fired a 80 round observed concentration on the enemy and excellent results was obtained. Only one dud out of 80 rds fired. The fuze is working very good when used with the 155 How. We are well pleased with it. -Brigadier General Carl A. Baehr, VI Corps Artillery Officer.

Note: Not sufficient observed fire by 105mm at this date to justify expressions of opinions. -P.T.H.

4. G-2 Periodic Report, VI Corps: See Incl No. One

PETE T. HEFFNER, JR  
Colonel, Infantry  
Combat Observer

Information copy to Commanding General, VI Corps without inclosure No. One





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Combat Observer  
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
Headquarters, VI Corps  
APO 46

SECRET  
Auth: CG, ETOUSA:  
Initials: *CTZ*  
DATE 29 Dec 1944

SUBJECT: Observer's Report No. 42 (Rumors) (G-2 Periodic Report, VI Corps)

TO : Chief, Combat Lessons Branch, G-3, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, APO 887, U. S. Army

1. Pursuant to instructions which place me on duty as combat observer with VI Corps, the following report is submitted in triplicate.

2. Material for this report was obtained by personal interview with Colonel Joseph L. Langevin, G-2 Section, VI Corps and Captain R. G. Syster, S-2, 157th Inf Regt, 45th Inf Div.

3. Rumors:

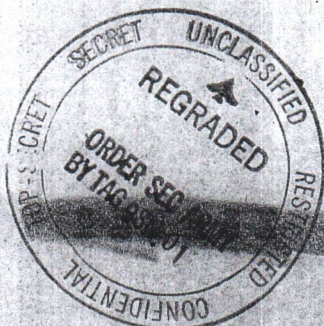
- a. Strasbourg Incident: (See Incl No. 1.)
  - b. Air Drops of Parachutists: (See Incl No. 1.)
  - c. Rumor on River Crossing: (See Incl No. 1.)
  - d. Dead American Soldiers: (See Incl No. 1.)
  - e. False Rumor on Enemy Activities: (See Incl No. 1.)
4. G-2 Periodic Report No. 135, VI Corps: (See Incl No. 2)

PETE T. HEPPNER, JR  
Colonel, Infantry  
Combat Observer

Information copy to Commanding General, VI Corps

2 Incls:

- Incl No. 1 (Report On Rumors)
- Incl No. 2 (G-2 Periodic Report No. 135, VI Corps)





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Combat Observer  
HEADQUARTERS, VI CORPS  
APO 46

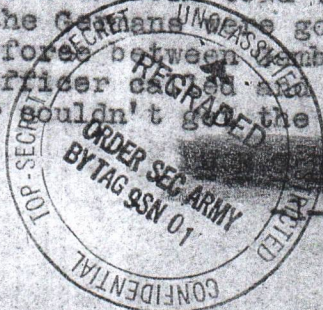
29 December 1944

1. In compliance with Memorandum for observers from Combat Lessons Branch, G-2, ETOUSA, dated 23 December 1944, the following information on rumors is furnished:

a. Strasbourg Incident: Several weeks ago a loud speaker was used by the Germans east of the Rhine River opposite Strasbourg to inform the civilians in Strasbourg that the Germans were coming back. (Our arty fire silenced the speaker). Note: the above was a build up for the following rumor: Several days later the British Broadcasting Co. (better not use name unless exact text of broadcast can be ascertained) announced over the radio that the Germans had crossed in two places north of Strasbourg. This announcement caused quite a bit of consternation among the civilians and some worry to our military units in that area. What had actually happened was that two small German patrols had crossed and had been driven back, some German prisoners were taken. The Seventh Army had to send a loud public address system to Strasbourg to quiet the people.- Colonel Joseph L. Langevin, GSC, VI Corps, G-2.

b. Air Drops of Parachutists: Build up of rumor:- It had become known in this area that German parachutists had been dropped behind the lines of the First Army. This command was warned to be on the alert for similar action by the Germans in this area. Reports came into VI Corps Headquarters that parachutes had been seen falling in this area. The units were warned to be on the alert and round them up. In the hunt for parachutes and men none were found. The rumors continued to spread and were exaggerated by being retold among the enlisted men. Reports of 15 parachutes falling during the afternoon 27 December 1944 were run down and found to be balls of anti-radar window. Rumors were stated to have been started by AAA men who had seen shining objects falling through their field glasses. Effective action taken: the VI Corps G-2 Section included in their G-2 Periodic Report No. 134, dated 27 December 1944 the following: "Reports of 15 parachutes falling during the afternoon were run down and found to be balls of anti-radar window. This may account for a large percentage of our recent parachute alerts particularly as no parachutists or discarded parachutes have been located at this time. This should not imply that our watchfulness should be relaxed as the dropping of enemy agents is still considered a strong capability, however, all observers should make efforts to distinguish parachutists from window which appear similar at high altitudes on clear, sunny days. Whenever there is any doubt, observer should include in his report, altitude of drop, and any other pertinent information that would aid in evaluation." The above information furnished by VI Corps G-2 Section was passed down to the FM by the lower units.-Colonel Joseph L. Langevin, GSC, VI Corps G-2.

c. Rumor on River Crossing: A short time back, about 17 December, a supposed to be French officer, 1st Lieut in a French officer's uniform told the Civil Affairs Officer in Haguenau that the Germans were going to make a crossing of the Rhine River in force between Stemsheim and Offendorf. The Civil Affairs Officer called and notified VI Corps. The Civil Affairs officer couldn't give the name of the French officer.





DECLASSIFIED  
Authority: 88150  
By: JY HNV, Date: 6/9/88

**SECRET**

Corps instructed CIC to run the rumor down. No success.  
Corps immediately issued order as follows:

**SUBJECT: Civilian Reports of Enemy Activity.**

**TO : Commanders, All Units**

1. In the past several days this Headquarters has received from lower units numerous unconfirmed civilian reports concerning enemy's intentions, particularly reports of activity along the Rhine River. Efforts to verify the accuracy and reliability of these reports have failed primarily because the original civilian source of the information could not be traced.

2. Effective at once any civilian offering information of enemy's intentions or activity will be placed under protective custody and a report will be made by the most expeditious means to A C of S, G-2 of divisions or to G-2, VI Corps.

The rumor caused the Corps some concern since it was started soon after the German attack against the First Army.

d. Dead American Soldiers: This rumor was being circulated by enlisted drivers of a unit attached to the 157th Inf Regt, 45th Inf Div. It spread rapidly throughout the Regiment.

Rumor: Two weeks ago a story reached our men in Lembach that one of our other regiments of this division had found two EM of their regiment in Lembach killed by civilians. That these two EM were found partially disrobed with evidence of having had or were prepared to engage in sexual intercourse. Further the rumor stated that seventeen American soldiers had been found dead killed by civilians, circumstances not given. Action taken: Regt S-2 of 157th Inf directed the Regt Civil Affairs Officer to question all of our units and attached units in our area and further to inquire through civilian channels the basis for such a rumor. His report stated that the only basis for such a rumor was the fact, or believed to be the fact, that three or four French soldiers had been killed in Strasbourg at the time of the occupation of that city by hostile civilians. So far as our own units were concerned there was no basis for the rumor. All of our units were notified that the rumor was false. - Capt R. C. Slyter, S-2, 157th Inf Regt, 45th Inf Div.

e. False Rumor on Enemy Activities: This happened in the area of one of our assault platoons 26 December 1944.

A rifle platoon had stopped for the night to dig in their positions. Situation on flank was obscure. They had contact with a small enemy group to their front. The attached AT platoon was directed to place one 57mm gun in position in the area of this rifle platoon. The gun Sgt upon reaching the rear of the platoon was directed to stop his truck and to remain perfectly quiet and not make any noise that 50-60 enemy had just walked through the platoon position from the rear. Origin not known but was in the rifle platoon. Regt called the Bn, Bn called Co, and directed the CO of Co, to check and verify story, and find out why platoon had not fired at the Germans. Investigation showed that one man of the platoon had seen three enemy walk across front of the left flank with mess gear in their hands, and move down the slope in front of the position. Action taken: Bn CO reprimanded the platoon leader for not immediately verifying such a story, and members of the company were cautioned against exaggerated and false statements.





**S E C R E T**

In our regimental SCP we require the name, and organization of individuals reporting. What was seen or heard, when and where.- Capt R. G. Slyter, S-2, 157th Inf Regt, 45th Inf Div.

PETE T. HEFFNER, JR  
Colonel, Infantry  
Combat Observer



SECRET

Combat Observer :Auth: CG, STOUSSA:  
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS:Initials: PTJ:  
UNITED STATES ARMY :DATE 23 Dec 1944:  
Headquarters, VI Corps : : : : : : : : : : : :  
APO 46

SUBJECT: Observer's Report No. 33 (Artillery Fire on Pill-box)  
(Booby-trapping the Dead) (Cemetery Strong Points)  
(G-2 Periodic Report, VI Corps)

TO : Chief, Combat Lessons Branch, G-3, Headquarters,  
European Theater of Operations, United States  
Army, APO 887, U. S. Army

1. Pursuant to instructions which place me on duty as  
combat observer with VI Corps, the following report is sub-  
mitted in triplicate.

2. Material for this report was obtained by personal  
interview with Brigadier Beahr, Arty Officer, VI Corps;  
G-2 Section, 14th Armored Div; Colonel Yeull, CO 411th Inf  
Regt, 103rd Inf Div and G-2 Section, VI Corps.

3. Artillery Fire on Pill-box: One FD of the 14th  
A D conducted precision adjustment on a large pill-box  
with 105mm Hows using adjusted coordinates. He then ad-  
justed (precision shoot) 8" Hows with T 105 fuze, scoring  
3 direct hits penetrating the pill-box and flushing the  
Krauts, then, on prearranged signal, he brought down time  
fire of 105 Hows and killed 12 Krauts. - Brig Gen Beahr,  
Artillery Officer, VI Corps.

4. Booby-trapping the Dead: A booby trapped body of  
a dead German soldier was found in our zone north of  
Salmbach. It exploded when examined killing one of our  
soldiers and wounding two. - G-2 Section, 14th Armored Div.

5. Cemetery Strong-Points: The German utilized the  
cemetery on the high ground NE of Olmbach and made it in-  
to a fortified strong point. - Col Yeull, CO, 411th Inf,  
103rd Inf Div.

It is reported that 5 or 6 pill-boxes in a cemetery  
north of Steinfeld are painted to look like houses. - G-2  
Section, 14th Armored Div.

6. G-2 Periodic Report, VI Corps: See Incl No. 1.

PETE T. HEFFNER, JR  
Colonel, Infantry  
Combat Observer

Information copy to Commanding General, VI Corps

1 Incl:  
Incl No. 1 (G-2 Periodic Report, VI Corps)

